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ASPIRA, INC. OF NEW JERSEY

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October 2, 1989

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Mr. Joseph Furfey
Manager
National Westminster Bank NJ
1 Exchange Place
Jersey City, N.J. 07302

Dear Mr. Furfey:

This is a request for a \$4,000 donation to support Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey's leadership development, dropout prevention, and college placement programs for Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and other minority youth.

I want to thank you, on behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and students, for your past support of Aspira's programs and give you an update on the achievements and highlights of the 1988-1989 program year, our 20th Anniversary.

Twenty Years of Achievement

Since Aspira's inception in December of 1968, our counselors have served over 26,500 Hispanic youth while placing over to 5,000 into post-secondary institutions. Many of the people who went through the Aspira process in the last twenty years are now leaders in education, business and politics. We are very proud of our achievements and we have made a big difference in the lives of many youth.

The Problem

Problems, however, still persist. The Hispanic dropout rate is 35.7% according to the United States Department of Education. In addition, because of low educational attainment levels, the economic status of Hispanics is alarmingly low. Twenty six per cent of the nations 7 million Hispanics live below the poverty line (\$11,611 for a family of four). The median income for the Hispanic family is \$20,310 (Source: Hispanic Link Weekly Report, Sept., 1988)

Addressing the Problem

ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey, through its Health Careers, Math & Science, Talent Search, Leadership Development, and Dropout programs works to alleviate these problems. Aspira's programs, which operate out of Essex, Camden, Passaic, Mercer and Hudson County, provide educational, personal and family counseling, as well as group activities which foster leadership and commitment.

In the 1988-1989 program year Aspira served nearly 1,600 youth on an ongoing basis. An additional 1,143 youth benefitted from ASPIRA's college trips, conferences, leadership retreats and other activities.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 1988-1989 YEAR

20th Anniversary Celebration

On October 6th, 1988, three hundred friends of Aspira gathered to celebrate "Leadership Through Education: Twenty Years of Vision" at New Brunswick's Hyatt Regency Hotel. Governor Thomas Kean delivered the keynote address. He noted "For twenty years you have offered hope and a helping hand to young Hispanics... your offspring are 25,000 New Jerseyans who are prouder and happier today". He also praised Aspira's commitment to career training and colorfully described education as "...the fare card on the subway to opportunity." The gala event, sponsored by AT&T, helped Aspira raise close to \$40,000 which will be used to support our programs for needy Hispanic youth.

New Centers Prosper

Having completed our second year of service to the youth of Trenton and Camden, we are happy to report that both centers are doing very well. The Camden Center served 238 students from Pyne Poynt Junior High School, Camden High School and Woodrow Wilson High School. The Trenton Center served 265 students from Junior High School #2 and Trenton Central High School. Over 85% of the seniors with whom we worked were placed in post-secondary schools and we enjoyed a 90% success rate in dropout prevention.

Leadership Development Retreat

In November, twenty eight Aspira Club Officers participated in a weekend retreat to the Princeton Educational Center in Blairstown, New Jersey. At this rural retreat, students through physical challenges that require group problem solving and team work, learn leadership skills. The skills they acquire are then used in leading and operating their respective Aspira clubs. In addition, these students planned and implemented a Youth Conference.

Agency-Wide Activities

For the third successive year, the Aspira club leaders organized a conference to address problems faced by today's youth. The event was held at Princeton University. Topics discussed amongst the two hundred and fifty attendees were drug abuse, the dropout problem, student/parent relations, and AIDS.

Throughout the 1988-1989 year, Aspira sponsored various conferences to expose Hispanic youth to career opportunities available upon graduation from high school and college.

One such conference was the Law Conference. Held at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton, a host of attorneys, law professionals and judges offered their experiences and guidance to over two hundred Aspira students. A very important aspect of this conference, as well as with our other conferences, is the use of role models. All of the professionals who address the Aspira students are Hispanic. Most have similar backgrounds to the students. They have come from urban areas, poor families, and areas with poor school systems. They act as examples to the students.

Other conferences held were the Career Day Conference at Jersey City State College, and a Health Careers Conference at William Paterson College.

Trips to post-secondary institutions are an important part of our program. It serves to promote the interest of students in college while also providing them with information about the respective schools. Trips were taken to Seton Hall University, Rutgers University, Rider College, Trenton State College, Jersey City State College, Camden County College, Glassboro State College, Temple University, Montclair State College, William Paterson College, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Stockton State College and Princeton University.

Internships

Aspira and AT&T continued their partnership as 28 Aspira students participated in the AT&T MSO/CFO High School Summer Internship Program. Interns are assigned meaningful work for the course of the internships, with emphasis on continuing education and development. To augment the on-the-job experience, a structured framework is provided in the way of weekly two hour sessions, where the interns are exposed to speakers from different departmental disciplines, selected workshops and seminars, and the production of a weekly newsletter, which is created, typed, and reproduced by the interns themselves. Interns are assigned to managers within AT&T. The managers act as mentors and role models. They offer counsel when necessary, and most importantly foster a relationship in which the student will feel comfortable and assured.

New Program

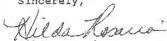
Working in collaboration with La Casa de Don Pedro, a Newark based community organization, Aspira is now working with single head of household women who have dropped out of school. The Hispanic Women's Resource Center is trying to better the future for these women by providing them with vocational training and preparing them to get their equivalency diploma. Women who go through the program will acquire the skills they need to be able to compete for good jobs.

The Future

As Aspira enters its third decade of service to the Hispanic Community of New Jersey, we plan to continue with our mission of leadership development, dropout prevention and college placement. We are very proud of our history and achievements, however, we still face many challenges. National Westminster Bank's support will help to secure Aspira's future.

Thank you again for your past support. We look forward to your continued assistance.

Sincerely,


Hilda Rosario
Executive Director